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CONTENTS



PAGE 8



PAGE 52



PAGE 54

REGULARS

- 4 **EDITORIAL** • The Ed waffles on in a desperate attempt to fill the page
- 5 **NEWS** • All the latest from our man with his foot on the pulse
- 15 **VIDEO REVIEWS** • If it's out, it's here STREET FIGHTER II takes the ring against FATAL FURY II
- 43 **COMPUTATION** • WIN STREET FIGHTER II art books
- 48 **MANGA REVIEWS** • You remember these things, bits of paper with squiggles on them. Novel idea eh?
- 50 **FINE ZONE** • A glance at some of the best tunes in 'tune land CULTURE
- 54 **CD REVIEWS** • Music to your ears (read ours actually)
- 65 **SUBSCRIPTIONS / NEXT ISSUE**
- 66 **RELEASE DATES**

FEATURE

- 7 **WORLDWIDE TV** • Josh Clark gives the Glasgow Sci-Fi con the quick once over
- 8 **WE'VE GOT WALLS** • DRAGONBALLS that is. Join us as we wander through the garden of 3D delights
- 12 **BLUE SKIES** • While Jim McLeenan soars to the heights of INFANZONI magic, Peter Cullen finds out that pigs can fly (and talk!)
- 19 **QUESTIONNAIRE** • Your chance to tell us what you think (and our chance to ignore it. Just joking - lol)
- 44 **KOSHIN HIGASHI** • PIONEER's future, retro, steampunk classic (EH? - Ed) gets a jolly good polishing from Robert Lyn Davies
- 47 **I'VE WANT YOU!!!** • (no comment)
- 52 **PLAYS! MAYSAN!** • This summer's Festival is brought to you in living colour
- 56 **HAVE WE MET YET BEFORE, MONSIEUR?** • Peter Cullen suffers from DEJA VU... Peter Cullen suffers from DEJA VU... Peter Cullen su... (that'll do - lol)
- 59 **PROJECT A-10** • A pocket guide to those crazy schoolgirls
- 62 **THE ANIME SOLAR SYSTEM** • We gaze at 15 of the brightest stars in UK anime
- 21 **MANGA**
- 21 **ODDUAH** • In the best B-movie tradition we present MASATAKO FUJIMURA's Saturday morning serial



J-FAN NEWSDESK

PEACH: Hello and welcome to the J-FAN Newsdesk. My name is Mr Peach and I'm here to bring YOU all the latest gossip from around the globe. Today I'm on location on Namekku planet, and shortly I'll be joined by our two guest newscasters, none other than those 2 Warriors themselves: Son Goku and Vegeta! Give them a big hand!
«CLAPPA CLAPPA CLAP»
PEACH: But now on with our first news item.

SD DOUBLE FEATURE

At the time of writing these wonderful people at the BBFC have still not passed the long awaited **ANIME PRODUCTS** release: **SD DOUBLE FEATURE** (aka **SD SCRAMBLE WARS**). The main problem seems to be that the BBFC want to classify each story separately instead of as a single video!?! WHY?? The video is presented as a whole and should therefore be classified as a whole. Come on now guys! what are you on...?

MARS ATTACKS

Those lovely people at PGN&R are currently looking into releasing their master SD II thriller, **ARMAGED**. In the UK Set In 2036 on Mars, it's all about a 19 year-old girl called Armaged: a Mormon police officer who is teamed up with detective Ross Sybilus who was recently transferred from Chicago. Earth look out for it around January 22! Watch out for a special feature coming soon.

NEW ANIME MAG

Yes: a brand new anime and manga mag should have reached the shelves by the time you read this.

It's called J-FAN, and looks utterly superb! Featuring the tremendous manga **ODDAXIN** by Masayuki Fujikawa. Look out for it.

PEACH: Well guys it gets wasn't that a drink? Hey now it's the time for our guest newscasters to introduce themselves. Go ahead Chams! **GOKU:** Heh. My name's Son Goku VEGEZA. Do I have to do this? **PEACH:** Heh heh. A little palm sport needed there eh? How tall me Goku, what do you do for a living? **GOKU:** I beat people up Mr Peach. **PEACH:** Sounds like fun! What about you Vegeta? **VEGETA:** I arrange flowers. On your grave. **PEACH:** Uh... OK. Now to our next item read by Goku himself...

GAUIN PRESS

That spinning chappie, Josh I want to rule the World! Clark needs your help. Yes you! Currently working on a movie of his film-manga hit **ARIEL DEVIL SCHOOLGIRL** with the help of Alternative Image and The Magic Camera Company whose credits include special effects for the **JUDGE DREDD** movie and the forthcoming **CRIBRACON**. Josh is in need of a few bits and pieces to speed production along. Things needed include a soundtrack, some voice actors and a 4mb or 8mb RAM board for an Amiga 1200. If you think you can help with any of these contact Josh at the following address:

GAUIN PRESS, 2 BIRCHDALE DRIVE, BIRKENHEAD, CRIMMERS 5 HUMBLEDSDRE, ON20 3LB or call him on 034451 573525

HARAO MIYAZAKI GROWS A BEARD Yes unbelievable but true. The God of modern anime now has whiskers of his own. Remember you heard it here first. But he's had it for ages lol.

GOKU: Well that's OK?

PEACH: That was just man! What a natural! Your turn now Vegeta. Take it away!
VEGETA: Why?
PEACH: Go for it!
VEGETA: What's the point?
PEACH: Oh never mind. I'll read it.

ANIME SUPRE-CONSOLE

Surprisingly, with the recent launch and all the hype of the new Super-Consoles, the SATURN and PLAYSTATION, very little has been heard of NEC's successor to the popular PC ENGINE, the PC Fx. As you can see from the ad, this machine is being squarely marketed as an anime console. In fact, one of the games currently available, called **BATTLE HEAT**, is a beat'em up with a difference. Instead of having either sprites or the more recent style of polygon characters, it basically looks just like a console-like OAM. But unlike those old interlaced games is g **DRAGON'S LAIR**, you have complete control over your character. Also, the designs and moves are straight out.





OF FIST OF THE NORTH STAR
Other titles for the PC-FX include **CUTTY HONEY**, **DRAGON KNIGHT IV** and **GALAXY FRAULEIN YUKA** (which has recently become an anime series in Japan). Unfortunately judging by NEC's handling of their PC ENGINE, it seems very unlikely that PC FX will ever have an official release in this country, so the only way to get hold of one is by import.

TEIUKA MANGA

This month brings the release of the first graphic novel in a five volume series by the God of Manga Osamu Tezuka. Called **AOBUI** it is set just before the Second World War and follows three men called Aobai, one of which is a beady eyed guy with a silly monocle. Ring any bells? It's a serious adult drama and will be released bi-monthly in a special deluxe hardcover edition with 256 pages.

GALAXY PRESS AGAIN

More news from Josh. If I ruled the world, Clark Galaxy Press are now pleased to announce that they can take orders for anime CDs. Titles are available at an incredibly low price and all are genuine, direct from Japan. Details and orders to the address above.

GOJUKU: Why are you so mean Vegeta? **VEGETA:** Look, this was your dumb idea!

GOJUKU: Are you afraid of the camera or something?

VEGETA: You call me a coward?

GOJUKU: **HAHAHAHAH**

PEACH: **HA! BAKK! BAKK!**

PEACH: Oh well, while they're busy fighting, here's some more news.

FIST OF FURY

After having the first series compiled into graphic novel format, the **Fist** is back! And it's about bloody time too I'd say. Any day now sees the launch of the continuing manga adventures of **THE FIST OF THE NORTH STAR** from Viz Communications in an B lower series.

By a mighty coincidence, I've invited that old bouncer Kenshiro to guest in next month's **Newsdesk**, so we'll have a few words from the man himself.

EVEN MORE GALAXY PRESS

A special news flash for all GP fans: A single based on Josh's **ARIEL**, **DEVIL SCHOOL** and recorded by **TUT TUT** from Suffolk is soon to be released. Is there no stopping this guy?

SO MUCH FOR THE LUPINS

Out in Mippon is a complete encyclopedia for the first TV series of that popular theft. **LUPIN III** Available not in book form, but on CD-ROM, it contains among other things opening and ending scenes and more pages of info than you could shake a very large stick at. Out now for **MAC** and **WINDOWS**.

PEACH: And it looks like Vegeta is winning here. He's just powering up a huge... oh my! It seems that Goku is dead! Vegeta has killed him!

Oh, wait, Goku's come back to life again. What a shock folks. And just in time for a bit of news too.

PLAYSTATION STUFF

Coming soon on the Sony Playstation in Japan is **TOKYO DUNGEON**, a cyberpunk RPG which anime undertones, looking vaguely reminiscent of **SLATCHER**, which is basically an anime **BLADE RUNNER**. Rumour has it that this is also due out soon.

ANIME ON US TV

Along with **SAILOR MOON**, **DRAGON BALL** and **SAMURAI TROOPERS** (**ROMAN WARRIORS** in the US), **TEKKAMAN BLADE** in the next anime to join the ranks on US TV. But surely it'll be butchered beyond all recognition? Well maybe not quite that bad, but the name change to **TOKKO MAN** certainly had me cringing. Yuck!

PEACH: Well folks, it seems like we're running out of time fast here. The lads are still battling it out over there, and Piccolo has just stopped in to stop them. This should be interesting. But I'll leave you there and let you know that next month I'm back on Earth and getting a tan in a post-apocalyptic setting. See you then! Ja!

For a FREE catalogue and a Stamped SAE to PURSUE, the Official Comic, Japanese Book, Anime Store, Call 193

PlayStation 2 Project 193 Tel: 0075 139 140 Fax: 0124 508 3845
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TEKKAMAN BLADE
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221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000, 1001, 1002, 1003, 1004, 1005, 1006, 1007, 1008, 1009, 1010, 1011, 1012, 1013, 1014, 1015, 1016, 1017, 1018, 1019, 1020, 1021, 1022, 1023, 1024, 1025, 1026, 1027, 1028, 1029, 1030, 1031, 1032, 1033, 1034, 1035, 1036, 1037, 1038, 1039, 1040, 1041, 1042, 1043, 1044, 1045, 1046, 1047, 1048, 1049, 1050, 1051, 1052, 1053, 1054, 1055, 1056, 1057, 1058, 1059, 1060, 1061, 1062, 1063, 1064, 1065, 1066, 1067, 1068, 1069, 1070, 1071, 1072, 1073, 1074, 1075, 1076, 1077, 1078, 1079, 1080, 1081, 1082, 1083, 1084, 1085, 1086, 1087, 1088, 1089, 1090, 1091, 1092, 1093, 1094, 1095, 1096, 1097, 1098, 1099, 1100, 1101, 1102, 1103, 1104, 1105, 1106, 1107, 1108, 1109, 1110, 1111, 1112, 1113, 1114, 1115, 1116, 1117, 1118, 1119, 1120, 1121, 1122, 1123, 1124, 1125, 1126, 1127, 1128, 1129, 1130, 1131, 1132, 1133, 1134, 1135, 1136, 1137, 1138, 1139, 1140, 1141, 1142, 1143, 1144, 1145, 1146, 1147, 1148, 1149, 1150, 1151, 1152, 1153, 1154, 1155, 1156, 1157, 1158, 1159, 1160, 1161, 1162, 1163, 1164, 1165, 1166, 1167, 1168, 1169, 1170, 1171, 1172, 1173, 1174, 1175, 1176, 1177, 1178, 1179, 1180, 1181, 1182, 1183, 1184, 1185, 1186, 1187, 1188, 1189, 1190, 1191, 1192, 1193, 1194, 1195, 1196, 1197, 1198, 1199, 1200, 1201, 1202, 1203, 1204, 1205, 1206, 1207, 1208, 1209, 1210, 1211, 1212, 1213, 1214, 1215, 1216, 1217, 1218, 1219, 1220, 1221, 1222, 1223, 1224, 1225, 1226, 1227, 1228, 1229, 1230, 1231, 1232, 1233, 1234, 1235, 1236, 1237, 1238, 1239, 1240, 1241, 1242, 1243, 1244, 1245, 1246, 1247, 1248, 1249, 1250, 1251, 1252, 1253, 1254, 1255, 1256, 1257, 1258, 1259, 1260, 1261, 1262, 1263, 1264, 1265, 1266, 1267, 1268, 1269, 1270, 1271, 1272, 1273, 1274, 1275, 1276, 1277, 1278, 1279, 1280, 1281, 1282, 1283, 1284, 1285, 1286, 1287, 1288, 1289, 1290, 1291, 1292, 1293, 1294, 1295, 1296, 1297, 1298, 1299, 1300, 1301, 1302, 1303, 1304, 1305, 1306, 1307, 1308, 1309, 1310, 1311, 1312, 1313, 1314, 1315, 1316, 1317, 1318, 1319, 1320, 1321, 1322, 1323, 1324, 1325, 1326, 1327, 1328, 1329, 1330, 1331, 1332, 1333, 1334, 1335, 1336, 1337, 1338, 1339, 1340, 1341, 1342, 1343, 1344, 1345, 1346, 1347, 1348, 1349, 1350, 1351, 1352, 1353, 1354, 1355, 1356, 1357, 1358, 1359, 1360, 1361, 1362, 1363, 1364, 1365, 1366, 1367, 1368, 1369, 1370, 1371, 1372, 1373, 1374, 1375, 1376, 1377, 1378, 1379, 1380, 1381, 1382, 1383, 1384, 1385, 1386, 1387, 1388, 1389, 1390, 1391, 1392, 1393, 1394, 1395, 1396, 1397, 1398, 1399, 1400, 1401, 1402, 1403, 1404, 1405, 1406, 1407, 1408, 1409, 1410, 1411, 1412, 1413, 1414, 1415, 1416, 1417, 1418, 1419, 1420, 1421, 1422, 1423, 1424, 1425, 1426, 1427, 1428, 1429, 1430, 1431, 1432, 1433, 1434, 1435, 1436, 1437, 1438, 1439, 1440, 1441, 1442, 1443, 1444, 1445, 1446, 1447, 1448, 1449, 1450, 1451, 1452, 1453, 1454, 1455, 1456, 1457, 1458, 1459, 1460, 1461, 1462, 1463, 1464, 1465, 1466, 1467, 1468, 1469, 1470, 1471, 1472, 1473, 1474, 1475, 1476, 1477, 1478, 1479, 1480, 1481, 1482, 1483, 1484, 1485, 1486, 1487, 1488, 1489, 1490, 1491, 1492, 1493, 1494, 1495, 1496, 1497, 1498, 1499, 1500, 1501, 1502, 1503, 1504, 1505, 1506, 1507, 1508, 1509, 1510, 1511, 1512, 1513, 1514, 1515, 1516, 1517, 1518, 1519, 1520, 1521, 1522, 1523, 1524, 1525, 1526, 1527, 1528, 1529, 1530, 1531, 1532, 1533, 1534, 1535, 1536, 1537, 1538, 1539, 1540, 1541, 1542, 1543, 1544, 1545, 1546, 1547, 1548, 1549, 1550, 1551, 1552, 1553, 1554, 1555, 1556, 1557, 1558, 1559, 1560, 1561, 1562, 1563, 1564, 1565, 1566, 1567, 1568, 1569, 1570, 1571, 1572, 1573, 1574, 1575, 1576, 1577, 1578, 1579, 1580, 1581, 1582, 1583, 1584, 1585, 1586, 1587, 1588, 1589, 1590, 1591, 1592, 1593, 1594, 1595, 1596, 1597, 1598, 1599, 1600, 1601, 1602, 1603, 1604, 1605, 1606, 1607, 1608, 1609, 1610, 1611, 1612, 1613, 1614, 1615, 1616, 1617, 1618, 1619, 1620, 1621, 1622, 1623, 1624, 1625, 1626, 1627, 1628, 1629, 1630, 1631, 1632, 1633, 1634, 1635, 1636, 1637, 1638, 1639, 1640, 1641, 1642, 1643, 1644, 1645, 1646, 1647, 1648, 1649, 1650, 1651, 1652, 1653, 1654, 1655, 1656, 1657, 1658, 1659, 1660, 1661, 1662, 1663, 1664, 1665, 1666, 1667, 1668, 1669, 1670, 1671, 1672, 1673, 1674, 1675, 1676, 1677, 1678, 1679, 1680, 1681, 1682, 1683, 1684, 1685, 1686, 1687, 1688, 1689, 1690, 1691, 1692, 1693, 1694, 1695, 1696, 1697, 1698, 1699, 1700, 1701, 1702, 1703, 1704, 1705, 1706, 1707, 1708, 1709, 1710, 1711, 1712, 1713, 1714, 1715, 1716, 1717, 1718, 1719, 1720, 1721, 1722, 1723, 1724, 1725, 1726, 1727, 1728, 1729, 1730, 1731, 1732, 1733, 1734, 1735, 1736, 1737, 1738, 1739, 1740, 1741, 1742, 1743, 1744, 1745, 1746, 1747, 1748, 1749, 1750, 1751, 1752, 1753, 1754, 1755, 1756, 1757, 1758, 1759, 1760, 1761, 1762, 1763, 1764, 1765, 1766, 1767, 1768, 1769, 1770, 1771, 1772, 1773, 1774, 1775, 1776, 1777, 1778, 1779, 1780, 1781, 1782, 1783, 1784, 1785, 1786, 1787, 1788, 1789, 1790, 1791, 1792, 1793, 1794, 1795, 1796, 1797, 1798, 1799, 1800, 1801, 1802, 1803, 1804, 1805, 1806, 1807, 1808, 1809, 1810, 1811, 1812, 1813, 1814, 1815, 1816, 1817, 1818, 1819, 1820, 1821, 1822, 1823, 1824, 1825, 1826, 1827, 1828, 1829, 1830, 1831, 1832, 1833, 1834, 1835, 1836, 1837, 1838, 1839, 1840, 1841, 1842, 1843, 1844, 1845, 1846, 1847, 1848, 1849, 1850, 1851, 1852, 1853, 1854, 1855, 1856, 1857, 1858, 1859, 1860, 1861, 1862, 1863, 1864, 1865, 1866, 1867, 1868, 1869, 1870, 1871, 1872, 1873, 1874, 1875, 1876, 1877, 1878, 1879, 1880, 1881, 1882, 1883, 1884

INTERSECTION 95

THE GLASGOW WORLD CON
"A survivor's tale" by Josh 'ONI' Clark

728

the world of drago

The manga may have finished, but the spirit lives on. And to celebrate the shameless merchandising of this most popular cultural icon, we give you a run down on some of the most exciting DRAGON BALL goodies.

➤ **SUPER SAIYAN SON GOHAN:** Wow, this beats a talking RoboCop anyway with three saiyans (Kamehameha! power-up and attack) AND a little flashing yellow light in the palm of his hand: this is a true DBZ otaku toy. My only gripe is that his head doesn't move, but a strong wrist and a pair of pliers'll soon fix that.

OTAKU RATING: 8/10. If it was a Ninja Turtle would YOU play with it?

➤ **SHOGUN WREST:** Kamehameha! Push it against Kamehameha! Push it against Kame... etc.

➤ **PENCIL:** I'm sure you don't need a description of this do you? You do? Tough.

OTAKU RATING: 3/10 or 5/10 if you don't sharpen it.

➤ **DRAGON BALL TIN:** What else can you put in your DBZ PENOL TIN?

➤ **VIDEO GAME:** Out in many, many

forms on almost all formats, this is the Megadrive version. It's a one-on-one beat 'em up (Oh, surprise!) with the player having the choice of 8 characters from the DBZ series (around the time of Perfect Cell). Initially, it's a bit weird to play but after you get used to the controls it's great fun, the inclusion of flying and the faithful "split-screen" technique gave it the edge over standard. But fighting games like Street Fighter II (Oh, controversy!)

OTAKU RATING: 5/10 (import and PC/MAT only, intended

for collectors) — so you can beat the crap out of Kiliyn

➤ **TRUNKS NOTE PAD:** This smart little pad of paper sports the ever popular and utterly funky Trunks on



the front, looking pretty hard as usual.

OTAKU RATING: 6/10

➤ **DRAGON BALL TIN:** To facilitate the use of your DBZ pencil in

➤ **PENCIL TIN:** Just the thing to impress everyone at school/college/work/the institution etc. It's also got the spooky metal tray inside it.

OTAKU RATING: 3/10

➤ **DRAGON BALL TIN:** What else can you put your DBZ pencil in?

➤ **DRAGON:** Used to draw straight lines (DRAGS).

OTAKU RATING: 10/10

➤ **DRAGON BALL TIN:** To complete your Dragonball accessory set.

➤ **DRAGON BALL TIN:** Kamehameha! Kamehameha! Kamehameha! Kamehameha! Kamehameha! Kamehameha! Kamehameha! Kamehameha! Kamehameha! Kamehameha!

BATTLE COLLECTIONS:

These smart packs of mini-figures are quite easily available and there are loads of them to collect,



although sets from the earlier part of the series are less common. Packs come in different sizes but the prices are quite steep so start saving those pennies.

n ball merchandise



If and No. 18, this is pretty good fun for an LCD game, if naturally limited. Take that! **WHAD! BAAA! BEEP!**
OTAKU RATING: 9/10 You'll never play BIL PANG again!
WHY YOU WANT IT: The smart tunes!!

● **LAMINATE CARDS:** Coming in either credit card or A4 size, these are pretty common items which look very effective when placed cunningly around your house (i.e. hallway, toilet, cupboard under the stairs etc...) **OTAKU RATING:** 4/5
WHY YOU WANT 'EM: Because they're **DRAGON BALL**, why else?

● **SWEETS AND BICKIES:** Let's face it. The Japanese aren't the best people in the world at making sweets. However, this fact is totally irrelevant when you come across the little toys you get in every pack. Battle Figures with background scenes, stickers, and rubber

'Dragon Balls' are just a few of the gems inside these packs. Tell a lie, the sweets aren't all that bad. (Cronch, cronch!) **OTAKU RATING:** 5/10 or 9/10 If you leave the will power not to eat them **WHY YOU WANT 'EM:** For the tasty flap!

● **'SUPER COLLECTION' ACTION FIGURES:** Although not nearly as much fun as your talking Son Gohan, these guys are well moulded and look very impressive when flying around the room. To achieve this, you will need to make a simple construction of string and pulleys, or an anti-gravity chamber will suffice. Failing that, a few bottles of Jim Beam will do the trick! **OTAKU RATING:** 6/5
WHY YOU WANT 'EM: So they can scold your talking Gohan.

● **HERO-PP CARDS:** The only major difference between the two is that the Hero Collection come with a points game thingy on the back, while PP cards have trivia questions. Yume **OTAKU RATING:** 7/10
WHY YOU WANT 'EM: For the weirdigan peel-back gold cards.

them as a keyring. Wahay! **OTAKU RATING:** 7/10
WHY YOU WANT 'EM: They make very fashionable earrings.

● **WALLET:** Although not too practical for keeping you loose change in, this is the perfect thing to contain all your idol cards, or alternatively you can put your credit cards inside so you can whip it out and flash it over the counter at shops. (No comment, bud.) **OTAKU RATING:** 7/10
WHY YOU WANT IT: Cos it's a lot better than your old Barclays. (Commentary: "Yes, son, get, please.")

● **LOVE STAMP:** **WHY YOU WANT IT:** Well, not really. But it's a nice little thing to have. (Commentary: "Yes, son, get, please.")



DBZ TISSUES:

Yes, you can now blow your nose with the help of your favourite characters. They're soft. They're white. Um... that's it really. Pfthrrrrrrrr!



DRAGON BALL PARTY PACK.

Although it's unlikely that you'll find one new anymore (ha ha, I've got one and you haven't!), you never know what a trip to a local boot fair may bring. Filled with tons of goodies, and aimed squarely at kids, this is a must have for the serious DBZ otaku. Included are key chain flicker-stickers, place mats, postcards, a height chart and a smart metallic plecty thing. Hours of fun!

well that you'll be inviting people in off the street just to have a look. (I know I have!)

ANIME CELLS

Very popular and therefore quite pricey, original anime cells from DRAGON BALL aren't that easy to come by in the UK, so a

'TAPESTRY' HANGING PICTURES: Forget paper, these cloth posters look so damn smart on your

little detective work may be in order. Most come with just the cell and production drawing, but if your bank account stretches far enough, a complete background setup is well worth the investment.





BIG

reasonably well, although some are a little blotchy. The best thing

is that the biggest ones can easily double for garden gnomes, making them the perfect gift for your Granny.

BIGGER

For those of you who don't like the gritty, hand edged image of DRAGON BALL, these SUPER DEFORMED (SD) figures are just the ticket. Ultra-sweet, they come in various sizes - 1 1/2", 3" and an impressive 5". They're all here, from Great Saiyaman to Mr Satan (the guy with his mouth wide open, moulded in plastic and painted



BIGGEST



Dragon Ball Z Super Deformed (SD) figures are available in various sizes and are a great addition to any collection. They are made of plastic and painted to look like the original characters.

BLUE SKIES

Hayao Miyazaki and the Anime of Idealism.

by Jim McLennan

"Although the world is beset with lots of seemingly intractable problems, such as the population explosion and environmental disruption, making it difficult to entertain hope, it's nevertheless wonderful to be alive."

Hayao Miyazaki, Japan's foremost director of anime, is often referred to as their Walt Disney. Probably a more accurate comparison would be Steven Spielberg, as Miyazaki's works possess similar imagination and genuine cross-population appeal. Their box-office success is also comparable: everyone of Miyazaki's last three films have taken more money than any other film in Japan this year the week released. Not more than any animated film. Not more than any Japanese film. Just more than ANY other film.

Miyazaki was born in Tokyo, on January 5th, 1941. His father was a director of anime. Miyazaki's company owned by Hayao's uncle which made rubber-duck Japan's much feared Boto fighters, a family atmosphere which may explain why so many of his films and stories have flight as a major theme. It was not until 1964 that he decided he wanted to become a comic artist (but he rapidly discovered he could only draw planes and battleships).

Unfazed, in 1965, he joined Japan's top studio, Toei Animation, as an art-director. It was here that he met Kato Takahata, with whom Miyazaki has collaborated on many projects since, and Akemi Ota, his wife to be. After 8 years with Toei, he left in search of new challenges and, despite a failed attempt to secure the rights to "Pippi Longstocking", Miyazaki finally got the chance to direct some episodes for "Lupin III", a then-new TV series.

However, it was to be eight more years, and nearly thousands of odds before Lupin also gave Miyazaki his second big break: the chance to move into feature film production, with Castle of Cagliostro, the second "Lupin III" movie. The film took only six months to make, from pre-production to completion, fast, even by anime standards, and it's lightning speed for Miyazaki, who habitually takes 12 to 18 months per movie. Given this, it's remarkable that the quality of the end product is still so high.

The hero is Lupin III, a descendant of Arsene Lupin, a character created by French author Maurice Leblanc at the turn of the century. Like his ancestor,

Lupin III is a gentleman thief of high intelligence, and begins movie too - except with regard to other people's valuables! He and sidekick Jigen rob a casino only to discover the money is all counterfeit. After heading to the principality where the Forgers are said to originate, they find themselves rescuing a lady in a wedding dress; that soon leads them into deep mystery and high adventure.

It's a superbly entertaining piece of fun! Comedy is perhaps the area where animation beats reality hands down, (since there are no limits), and Castle reveals in the freedom. All the characters here are memorable: Fujiko, the free-spirited female thief; Genzake, the incorporeal detective who's life is dedicated to capturing Lupin but who ends up working with him; and above all, Lupin III, arguably the best male character in anime. If the maker of Hudson Hawk had any sense, it might have ended up looking something like this.

The following year, 1980, Miyazaki directed two more episodes of the TV series under the pseudonym of "Telecom" - the name of the company where he was "officially" working as an animation instructor. He then began working on a TV series loosely based on Silverlock Holmes (all the characters are dogs), a co-production with Italian TV. Five tapes of episodes from the series were released here on VHS video as "Silverlock Hound", and can be found occasionally in rental shops.

In 1982, the manga "Nausicaä of the Valley of Wind" began in *Animage*, and also rapidly began on converting it to an anime. The resulting film appeared in 1984, and is to date sadly the only Miyazaki feature officially available in this country. Set in a post-apocalyptic world where humanity is being squeezed out by a toxic jungle, the heroine is Nausicaä, a young princess who must fight plans to revive the technology that destroyed civilization. It's the most overtly green of all Miyazaki's movies, though majority espouse a certain eco-friendly attitude. Released in a severely edited format as "Warriors of the

Wind", even with 25 minutes missing and its more adult concerns toned down for a younger audience, it's still a powerful piece of work.

The film's success spurred Miyazaki to set up Studio Ghibli, his own animation house. It's first project was *Castle in the Sky* (Laputa), undoubtedly Miyazaki's most ambitious work to date at 120 mins long, rarely seen length for animation. Said Miyazaki: "I had always wanted to make a movie about a flying city in the sky, perhaps because of the books I read while I was young. Laputa, the city was from 'Gulliver's Travels'.



Set around the turn of the century it's about the search for Laputa, the legendary city which floats in the sky and dates from an unknown era, with technology far in advance of anything then available. Given a sample of this tale to earth, a descendant of the Laputan kings seeks to reclaim his heritage for his own ends. To do this, he kidnaps Sheeta, the rightful heir to Laputa, though she is unaware of it, which brings him into conflict with Pazu, the son of an aviator

Whimsy. It may be partly autobiographical as Miyazaki's own mother suffered from spinal tuberculosis for nine years when Hayao was young, and she spent much of the time in hospital. Certainly it's straight from the heart. Few films can melt me, but *Totoro* reduces the writer to the consistency of apocryph of wit upon mainstream every time, which is quite something given that this unnamed woman in nostalgia is for a land on the other side of the globe, and a time before I was born. Perhaps Miyazaki tapped into some unconscious common imagery but the result is pure delight, an old-fashioned parade of wonders including perhaps Miyazaki's best creation - the Cat Bus, a neologism creature with a grin a mile wide, looking like something designed by a trained soft toy manufacturer.

I have a slightly embarrassing confession to make about Miyazaki's next film, *Kiki's Delivery Service*. I don't actually like it that much. Perhaps a telling piece is one from an interview Miyazaki gave the year *Kiki* was released, when he said, "I want to see whether or not I can make a movie without any action." I think *Kiki* proved he could. This isn't necessarily a problem - after all, *Totoro* is not exactly action-packed, if there was something to compensate for it. And that's where *Kiki* fails to deliver: the characters are distinctly no fun, the plot is distinctly no-plot and only the animation itself is

anything above average.

Three-act she goes to the city to seek her fortune. She meets some people. She has some mild adventures losing her cat, for example. She finds she can be happy despite her lack of spell-casting ability if this sounds like a pretty raffi TVM, I'm picking it about right. Remove all conflict and struggle from a movie and it takes very careful plot and character design to hold the audience's interest. *Totoro* managed it because every sequence had a wonderful surprise. But in *Kiki*, everything pans out exactly in your respect, and the result is flat as I'm concerned is Miyazaki's most forgettable movie to date. Your mileage may vary.

Porco Rosso represented a return by Miyazaki to the action/comedy genre in which he started. Instead of films, which, as he said with conque in-cheek, "would let me get more famous awards each time." Porco is first and foremost an adventure story set in Italy during the 1920s, and it's about the heroes and villains, pirates and aces who flew in that era, a theme which gives Miyazaki plenty of opportunity to indulge in his well-known passion for airplanes and flight.

The twist, however, is that the hero is a pig. Literally. He was once human, but after a strange near-death experience during a dog-fight, he found himself with a pig's head. This is a nice idea, but nothing much is ever made of it, beyond



who wants to find Laputa to prove his father's claim of seeing the city.

There is much more to it than that. Miyazaki makes full use of two hours to cram in more story than you'd think possible, yet it is never overwrought. The film is the perfect example of Miyazaki's philosophy: "I do not make movies with the intention of presenting any messages to humanity. My main aim in a movie is to make the audience come away from it happy." During production, Miyazaki nacked up 14-hour days for six months, non-stop, not just drawing story boards but he doing his staff's meals, not where he fetches were delicious. The end result is truly a Hayao Miyazaki film, one of the best examples ever of what can be done with animation. And the setting for Laputa seems vaguely familiar. It's probably because Miyazaki travelled to Wales in May 1983, to look at locations.

From this point on, Miyazaki's output slowed, reflecting labor dedication to quality. After the massive epic of *Laputa: My Neighbour Totoro*, released in 1988, is a totally different movie, on a much smaller and personal scale. Two small girls go with their father to stay in the country, in Mother's ill in hospital. They stay in an old house, and meet the family of Totoros who inhabit the nearby forest. Now, what is a Totoro? Good question. Or just imagine the cutest, naughtiest, warmest thing you can, and multiply it by ten.

It's hard to say what stops the film from descending into Disneyesque:



a very close sequelist where he tells of his transformation. Otherwise it's business as usual as he rescues a gang of prisoners from some schoolgirls, avoids the attentions of the fascist government, and fights for the honour of his friends. It's effective enough stuff, and after the "old Mr" that was Kik, it's a relief to see him rediscover the art of things happening. These things, however, don't seem to link into each other as well as in his best movies: the scenes between the sea-people seem a little contrived, and the political subplot is inconspicuously 11.8 rather than a pig (that a fascist!) But even flawed Miyazaki is still highly enjoyable.

Each Miyazaki film seems more successful than the last, demonstrating mastery of every facet of film-making - plot, characters, action atmosphere - over and above the skills necessary to create good animation. His trump card is an ability to transcend the usual clichés of the field: the heavy SF content in anime is understandable, but too often the creators fail to appreciate anime's strengths and weaknesses. While its cheaper to drive spaceships, giant robots, etc, they can NEVER be as impressive as 'the real thing' available through live-action. The "Blackdinner" cityscape may be 10 years old, but it's still far better than even those in Akira or Suburman Orga. Despite Miyazaki's deep interest in technology for its own sake plays an insignificant role in his films. What is important is how people relate to technology: the abuse of science and how power can corrupt, is another recurring theme.

Recently he seems to have concentrated more on other facets apart from direction: "I'm a Sumoator" out in July from Studio Ghibli, sees him acting as producer and scriptwriter, and it seems that he is becoming slightly less idealistic than in the past. His films have always been moral, without ever seeming preachy and have a strong sense of right and wrong. Harder and duty through rarely is there much black or white in his characters. Even the worst of villains is operating for plausible reasons, and it's easy to see ourselves in their shoes. But, as in Warner movies, good always wins. This eternal optimism is, perhaps more than anything else, what distinguishes a Miyazaki movie. And in these days of Tinseltown and tam-bang action, he provides a very welcome breath of fresh air.

I really don't know why my words are so highly regarded, but then there's no guarantee that I will continue to enjoy acclaim. Many times I've waited for younger filmmakers of great promise to come along, and I've even tried fostering them - but to no avail. I myself intend to continue making films. I have no idea how long I can go on, or what the next generation holds.



THE PIG TALKS

A review of the dubbed Porco Rosso by Peter Cullen

A bit of a mystery, this one, arriving as it did on my desk by means of an unlabelled cassette bearing the intriguing legend 'watch Mr'. Surprised I was, then, when the first images appeared, to discover that it was one of my favourite films of all time, Hayao Miyazaki's fabulous aerial adventure Porco Rosso (also known by the slightly more cumbersome title The Crimson Pig). Being set in a fictionalised 1930s with a hero who is a man with the face of a pig would ordinarily relegate a film to the 'weird' bin, but here, as with all cinema's great directors, execution is the key. Just look at Spielberg's success with a doll looking rubber fish in Jaws, Cameron's The Terminator a film with a nonsensical plot and a star with the acting ability of Virgil Tracy without the strings, or Scorsese, in which Tim Burton manages to inspire sympathy for characters who die in the first ten minutes. Miyazaki is one of those rare filmmakers with the talent required to take seemingly hopeless subject matter and turn it into a film that can excite, enthral and entertain.

Porco Rosso is a perfect example of this talent, although the bestial designation of the hero, Marco Pappot, is of minimal importance as a plot element, only affecting his interaction with other characters in what they call him (Mr Porcellino, Porco Rosso etc.) This is the vital suspension of disbelief that the viewer must accomplish to appreciate the wonderful characterisation and intelligent dialogue herein. The reason for Marco's transformation is never really explained, only touched upon by a bludge but extremely moving scene about the

quilt of surviving lost friends. In the light of this, it is possible to see it as a metaphorical change rather than a genuine physical one, representing Marco's death of personhood when he wins to trade places with his friend in actual death is denied.

If all this sounds needlessly speculative and more than a little pretentious, I apologise, and don't let it put you off. What we have here is a beautiful and lovingly made film, with Miyazaki's customary exploding water, porridge thick clouds, and cute details, brought to life with animation as good as animation gets.

Set in the morally ambiguous and little explored world of pre-Second World War Italian sky pirates, the realistic aircraft designs and understated but sinister presence of the newly installed fascist party make this Miyazaki's most subtle and mature film to date, a film suitable for all ages, unlike Disney's works which appeal only to kids and big kids.

As to the quality of the dub itself, it's surprising good, particularly Marco himself, who is played by a Clint Eastwood sound-alike, and Curtis, Marco's Texan flying ace who sees himself as not only the world's greatest pilot but also its greatest 'cody' man. The only important complaints I have are that Pirate leader Mena Uta is almost unintelligible and minor characters are somewhat lacking in emotion. To date, however, I still don't know the origins of this English language version as it's still not commercially available. It was created under the supervision of original creators Studio Ghibli. However, which explains why it is so much better than the usual.

PATLABOR II

DATA 2



DATA 1

LABEL
MANGA VIDEO
RUNNING TIME
108 MINS
CERTIFICATE
PG
PRICE
£13.99 (DUB)



STAFF

DIRECTOR
Mamoru Oshii
CHARA DESIGN
Masami Yuuki
Akemi Takada
MECHA DESIGN
Yutaka Izubuchi
Masaharu Kawamori
MUSIC
Kenji Kawai
CAST
ASUMA
David Jarulis
NOA
Briony Glassco
GOTO
Peter Marinkor



VERDICT: A TRUE CLASSIC OF ANIME

SCENARIO

The year is 1999. In South-East Asia, a UN labor team is destroyed by terrorists, beginning the first steps toward the downfall of Japanese military and governmental power. Three years later when martial law is announced and the police take over the streets, the members of the now disbanded SFD are called upon to defend the city. Little do they know that the mainstream behind the terrorists is none other than Nagamura's former teacher and ex-lover, Tsuge. Nagamura's loyalty is split between her responsibility to the SFD and her feelings for her ex-lover.

What can I say about this video? After being bowled over by the first PATLABOR release, I couldn't wait for this one to arrive. There are two main differences between the films, the first being the more intensive use of computer graphics and the second in the character design. Not having the benefit of seeing the "evolution" of the characters through the TV series (HINT ALERT), the changes still come as a bit of a shock, but there is no need to worry as they do work well. The animation is flawless and the mecha are perfect. The dub is very well done with NOA having a little gravel voice and ASUMA is as heavy as iron. One of the most disturbing things in this film is the music (see review this month), which gives a really spooky atmosphere to the whole thing. This really comes as a top recommendation and if you haven't seen the first film, I urge you to buy it immediately. Now the pain begins, as you've even lost of an excuse not to see them.

D.D.D.D.

If you've seen the first movie, then you'll know pretty much what to expect in terms of style and pace from this one. If you haven't seen it, yet, then as long as you don't expect tons of mecha action then you will not be disappointed. Yet again, Mamoru Oshii proves that he's one of anime's finest directors with some amazing atmosphere that is usually more akin to live action. As you'd expect from Oshii, there's plenty of talk inside a little too much in places, but when the action comes along it's powerfully directed. Really, it's no wonder that this was the best animated film of 1998. Despite a 14 rating, this is truly an adult movie, and one that shows how beautiful and moving the anime medium can be. I can only hope that Manga Entertainment continues to release videos of this quality in the future.

D.D.D.D.



VIDEO REVIEW

STREET FIGHTER II



DATA 1

LABEL
MANGA VIDEO
RUNNING TIME
88 MINS
CERTIFICATE
15
PRICE
£12.99 (DUB)



DATA 2

STAFF

DIRECTOR
Gisaburo Sugii
PRODUCER
Kenichi Imai
MUSIC
Cory Levios, John D'Andrea
CHARA DESIGN
Shuko Murase
CHIEF ANIMATION DIRECTOR
Yasuhiro Ohshima
CAST
RYU
Hank Smith
KEN
Ted Richards
CHUN LI
Mary Briscoe

VERDICT: SMASHING

SCENARIO

The story to **STREET FIGHTER II** is simple. Evil dude M. Bison has sent out robotic scouts in search of the world's finest street fighters. His aim is to brainwash them into working for him and form an army to take over the world, as you may well expect. His prime target is Ryu, but proving a hard man to find, Ryu's former friend Ken becomes an ideal target to draw him into the trap. Needless to say many fights ensue and everyone has a jolly good time giving each other a jolly good kicking. Enjoy.

Being a fan of Jack Chan movies, I've noticed that is crime, Kung Fu films never really miss the probability of the action. They're just never that simple: the action in **SP II** isn't brightly coloured and it's a shame that it looks really like the first thing. Adding to this, the director's taking quite a risk, although the plot of **STREET FIGHTER II** for the opening fight between Ryu and Sagat. The soundtrack, though re-recorded, is perfectly complementing the frantic pace of the film.

It doesn't matter if you've never played the game, because **SP II** is such a smart action movie that it will appeal to anyone who likes to watch a good fight. The director of the live action version must be smiling.

★★★★★

Well what the director has done today, we finally get the chance to see how it should have been done. There's a great hard rock soundtrack that matches the power of the fights and it's used to full potential. As for those fight scenes, they put the **Full Metal Jacket** with **Shogun**, with director's favourite special moves. It's all being performed like a good fight has to be between Chun Li and Vega - boy can she kick! Although the director has to admit it's given, this does, suffered from the story, and as you start guess that there can look forward to a Chun Li character. One thing that was a shame was the lack of Chun Li. She was absent for a couple of minutes, and although it was a good couple of minutes I feel that she should have been used a bit more. Anyway, although this isn't going to be a ground-breaking video, it should be in everyone's collection.

★★★★★



MADOX-01



DATA 1

LABEL
MANGA VIDEO
RUNNING TIME
41 MINS
CERTIFICATE
PG
PRICE
£9.99 (DUB)

SCENARIO

The MADOX SLAVE TRIGGER is the fastest and most agile weapons system ever created by the U.S. MITTING. But imagine what would happen if a high school student who is born for a date inadvertently goes 'harmless' locked inside. So begins a rather hectic evening for Koji Kusanagi, who now has the mad and aptly named Lt. Kijima out to find and destroy the MADOX, after an embarrassing defeat by it in a test run. My Kusanagi just wants it back in one piece. Where will it all end?

Beginning with a series of trigger scenes between the MADOX and some army tank tanks, this seemed quite promising. The MADOX itself is well designed, with all its joints and gears etc. and the drama design are appealing, very angular and unique. But unfortunately there is very little story or character development. No real build-up, pumping action, and only a few moments to make you smile. The acting is below par, with a couple of very poor voices which turn a potentially good scene into a merely average one. It's not actually terrible, but it certainly isn't great.



This is without doubt not a video for the uninitiated, but one for the serious mecha fan only. The story is unimportant, it's quite forgettable and to be honest, this only would have worked better if there weren't any other scenes and just left the mechs. The only real reason to watch it is for the magnificent mecha designs. Right from the box sequence, with some of the most detailed designs I've seen, you'll never again see the MADOX and you just don't care about the characters. If you're a big fan of mechs then you'll probably get a kick out of it, but if you get something resembling a story in your mind, stick to THE LABOUR MODEL.



VERDICT: NICE MECHA BUT LITTLE ELSE



DATA 2

STAFF

DIRECTOR
Shinji Aramaki
CHARA DESIGN
Hideaki Tamura
Mecha DESIGN
Shinji Aramaki
Kimitaro Yamane
MUSIC
Satoshi Yashima
CAST
Koji
Michael McChes
Ellie
Nadia De Lencastre
LT KIJIMA
Peter Woodward

PROJECT A-KO 4



DATA 1

LABEL
MANGA VIDEO
RUNNING TIME
45 MINS
CERTIFICATE
12
PRICE
£9.99 (DUB)

SCENARIO

An ancient tomb, a giant symbol, a lonely teacher and a massive alien fleet heading towards Earth now the search for the fourth incarnation of the A-KO series. A-KO and A-KO are flying it out again while B-KO's father is setting up an arranged marriage between school teacher Mrs. Asumi and the cocky, but unfortunately, A-KO is still going for C-KO and A-KO and B-KO are still going for A-KO. A-KO doesn't seem to care but Mrs. A-KO and Mrs. Asumi actually does like her and it's confused already. But all is revealed, tested and sorted in the climax to the Division City series.

To the real part of the Division City storyline is here. Comparing this with the previous episodes of the A-KO series, I found that it doesn't seem quite as funny, although there were a couple of classic moments in it. But despite this, it's still A-KO and therefore very enjoyable, with decent enough scripting and acting. One thing I would have liked is to have seen more of A-KO and the Captain in this, as they only get a minuscule part. As that's left now is the WIKIDU story and I hope that it keeps up the high standard.



This has got to be the best of all the A-KO's released so far. After the old release of A-KO 3, this one shines. There's a number in abundance here with some rather weird shots in the background and even a guest appearance from a certain young lady in a leopard skin bikini. Oh, there are a couple of slow moments but there are instantly forgotten as the action picks up. I really cannot recommend this video enough, so if you've never experienced the A-KO phenomenon, then go out now and buy the best of the series and don't be out of it by number three. This more than makes up for it.



VERDICT: A PERFECT END TO THE SERIES



DATA 2

STAFF

DIRECTOR
Tajiri Moriyama
CHARA DESIGN
Tajiri Moriyama
MUSIC
Yasunori Honda
CAST
Venus Terzo
Cathy Weseluck
Lynda Boyd

VIDEO REVIEW

ANGEL COP 6



DATA 1

LABEL
MANGA VIDEO
RUNNING TIME
26 MINS
CERTIFICATE
18
PRICE
£5.99 (DVD)

SCENARIO

The S.T.P. special technology force has been wiped out, and only Angel is left to face the awesome power of Lucifer (the psychic hunter). Meanwhile, Tai is finally getting close to the Shadow Government (that started this wave of destruction). Will Angel be able to defeat Lucifer? And Tai get too close to the truth? Will there be a sequel? Will Manga Video continue to squish the end titles so that you need a microscope to see them? Find out.

Well, this really does not say a lot about the content here. ... Even though the design and art has improved since the first episode is released, that is cannot save the video. There are few things left on in the book box (chapter for any price), the first is the need to have lengthy explanations of the storyline every 10 minutes, and the second is the over use of swearing. Angel, CDF, suffers from both of these. Angel goes so much into the action, the first of the series is a real sell. Even, don't get me wrong, the action is a treat, but the... powerful... explanation leaves you feeling only you have wasted sympathy for any of the characters, and I hate to say the dub isn't that good thing for a new series I think.



As for the quality of this series has moved pretty much the same, and the first episode is no different. The animation is still good, but a few subtle touches to it and the subject will bleed are still here to some degree. Core fans should watch out for the way that Lucifer gets what is coming to her. My main grip is with the prolonged and boring scene where Tai is held captive and subjected to a lengthy explanation of the plot so far. And the final battle could have been a lot more intense. To be honest is only just acceptable. Having failed to improve since the first episode. Overall an average ending to an average series.



VERDICT: ONLY IF YOU'VE GOT THE REST



DATA 2

STAFF

DIRECTOR

Ichiro Itano

CHARA DESIGN

Nobuteru Yuki

MUSIC

Hisashi Ogasawara

CAST

ANGEL

Sharon Holm

RAIDON

John Hunter

TACHIBANA

Danny Flynn

BABEL II - PARTS I&II



DATA 1

LABEL
BAST 2 WHIST
RUNNING TIME
25 MINS EACH
CERTIFICATE
15
PRICE
£5.99 EACH (DVD)

SCENARIO

After being plagued by dreams of a voice calling him Babel II, high school student Ko-ichi is contacted by a mysterious young woman who tells him that he's a psychic. Convinced by this woman, he decides to go to the headquarters of an organisation of psychics whose intentions at first seem purely reasonable. But Ko-ichi senses that things are not as they seem.

BABEL II, you have been found guilty as charged on two counts. Count one being - video of a fine script. Count two on having rights questionable with asking. Production may have your running up. All told, the amount has a blind spot with no redeeming qualities that I can see. Animation is of standard fare, and the only features which take it from a hanging are the extra sets for the... stock... and the... As a fine student... and... when you know that this video to cut out is a... On hearing the ending I will now say... BABEL II, you are sentenced to be taken from this place and made to watch CDs for the rest of your life. What God have mercy on your soul. Only for the hard teacher fans.



I must say that I was expecting a big standard psychic yam from this, but I was surprised. Although the animation isn't hyper detailed or anything, the design is fairly appealing. The voice acting is quite solid, so for the most part which is a pleasant change from the usual. Good who holds every line. Action is good and the whole thing was quite nice and watchable although perhaps putting both on one disc would have been more desirable. In part one ends just as the story gets interesting. Not too much too.



VERDICT: MAKE UP YOUR OWN MIND (WE CAN'T)



DATA 2

STAFF

DIRECTOR

Toshihisa

Matsumoto

CHARA DESIGN

Shingo Aoki

MUSIC

David Tooley

CAST

Steve Balen

Mike McConchie

Mari Dean

Wendee Lee

J-FAN ULTIMATE QUESTIONNAIRE

This is where we give you the chance to let us know what you think and really slag someone off. If you just fill in the questionnaire, leaving any that you are unable to answer blank, and pop it in the post, your voice will finally be heard.

Best of all, one lucky person, picked at random, will win a 12 issue subscription to J-FAN. All you have to do is make sure you fill in your name and address clearly in the relevant space below.

If you don't want to shred your copy of this most collectable mag, just use a photocopy instead, and please make sure that it arrives before DECEMBER 16th, or your chances will be slim to say the least.

SECTION ONE - PERSONAL DETAILS

NAME _____
 ADDRESS _____

 POSTCODE _____

AGE UNDER 15 ☐ 15-17 ☐ 18-25 ☐
 25-35 ☐ 35+ ☐
 SEX MALE ☐ FEMALE ☐
 MARRIED ☐ SINGLE ☐

PLEASE ENTER ME FOR THE DRAW

SECTION TWO - YOUR INTERESTS AND OPINIONS

RATE YOUR INTEREST IN THE FOLLOWING

NOT INT VINT

ANIME MUSIC
 JAPANESE POP
 CONSOLE GAMES
 JAPANESE CULTURE
 ANIME MERCHANDISE
 JAPANESE FOOD/SNACKS
 MODEL KITS
 JAPANESE LANGUAGE
 EASTERN LIVE ACTION FILMS
 EASTERN MARTIAL ARTS FILMS

DO YOU OWN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING

MEGADRIVE/MD/3DO ONLY ☐ MEGA CD ☐ 32X ☐
 SUPER FAMICOM/NINTENDO ☐ PC ENGINE/QUO ☐
 NEOGEO ☐ PLAYSTATION ☐ 3DO ☐ SATURN ☐ PC98 ☐
 OTHER _____

WHAT MAGAZINES DO YOU READ REGULARLY

ANIME IT! ☐ MANGA MANIA ☐ 2000AD ☐
 COMPUTER GAME MAGS ☐ US COMICS ☐
 JAPANESE LANGUAGE ANIME MAGS ☐
 US ANIME MAGS ☐ MARTIAL ARTS MAGS ☐
 MODEL MAGS ☐ UFO/POREAN MAGS ☐ SFM ☐

RATE THE FOLLOWING COMPANIES FROM 1 TO 3 ON THE FOLLOWING

AREAS (1=LOW, 3=HIGH)

ANIME
PROJECTS

MANGA
VIDEO

EXPORT
FILMS

PIONEER

WESTERN
CONNECTION

EAST 2 WEST

DUBBING
 SUBTITLES
 RELEASES
 PACKAGING
 IMAGE

			N/A		N/A

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE MORE OR LESS OF THE FOLLOWING GENRES

MORE

SAME

LESS

HORROR
 COMBOY
 SPORT
 ACTION
 SCI FI
 FANTASY
 DRAMA
 OTHER

Abstract

[illegible]

Life Action Movie **A** _____

ANIME SOUNDTRACK - 1

[illegible][illegible][illegible]

ANIME TITLE - 4

[illegible]

Figure 1. The effect of the concentration of the *Agaricus bisporus* spores on the growth of *Agaricus bisporus* and *Agaricus bisporus* spores on the growth of *Agaricus bisporus*.

2. TWO MARKS WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH

WHO IS YOUR FAVOURITE ANIME/MANGA CHARACTER

1. **Identify the main components of the system.** The system consists of a **client** and a **server**. The client is responsible for sending requests to the server, and the server is responsible for processing these requests and returning responses.

[illegible]

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HOWARD: You can't tell a politician apart from the opposition.

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1. 2010年10月1日起, 凡在中华人民共和国境内销售货物或者提供加工、修理修配劳务以及进口货物的单位和个人, 均应按照《中华人民共和国增值税暂行条例》及实施细则缴纳增值税。2010年10月1日起, 凡在中华人民共和国境内销售货物或者提供加工、修理修配劳务以及进口货物的单位和个人, 均应按照《中华人民共和国增值税暂行条例》及实施细则缴纳增值税。

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THE MA SHOP

CONCLUSION

Figure 4. Effect of the concentration of the initiator on the polymerization of *l*-lysine.

[illegible]

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Table 1. Demographic characteristics of study population

[illegible]

WIN!!

STREET FIGHTER II ART BOOKS

To celebrate the release of **STREET FIGHTER II-THE ANIMATED MOVIE**, MANGA ENTERTAINMENT have been kind enough to supply us with 5 very special prizes to give away.

STREET FIGHTER II-ASIA INTERNATIONAL is a glorious full colour art book, featuring a wealth of beautifully drawn illustrations. Also included is a special fold-out two sided poster that will make your friends weep and go green with envy.

So what do you have to do to win one of these? It's simple. Just look at the picture of Ghaissim below and tell us what he's saying and who is he saying it to. Note that it doesn't have to be another SF II character.



The 5 most amusing and original entries will each win a copy of the book, which incidently is in Japanese, but with pictures this good who cares?

Send your entries to: **STREET FIGHTER II COMPETITION, J-FAN, TREVITHICK HOUSE, MOORSWATER, LISKEARD, CORNWALL, PL14 4LH.**

Closing date for entries is **DECEMBER 1st**. Winners will be announced in a future issue. The Editor's decision is final, so there

**KISHIN
CORPS
ACTIVE
DEFENCE
FORCE**

KISHIN HEIDAN

**BY
ROBERT
LYN
DAVIES**

Pioneer is busy, setting it out: it's own version of all the most famous anime genres. It's flagship title - *Tenchimaya* brings us a superior wacky 'magical girlfriend' story. Alternatively there's *Kishin Heidan* a classic big robot adventure story. Told in the retro-tech style which dispenses with the sleek fluid lines of modern high technology to reintroduce the heavy engineering of the 1930's and 40's. Allow me to take you on a brief guided tour of this 'Republic serial' world. Where square jawed heroes battle against the mighty Third Reich and an irrepressible alien foe. Where guts and optimism will win out against formidable odds every time. Ladies and Gentlemen meet *Kishin Heidan*.

The story starts in 1941. The Kanto army is subjugating Manchuria. Either is waging war against Europe and the Japanese Navy has just bombed Pearl Harbor.

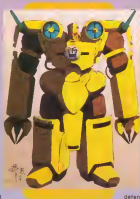
However not everything is exactly as history records. For instance Eva Braun is now a scientist attempting to decode the secrets of alien 'control modules' recovered from the bodies of inhuman troops who are descending from the skies as potential allies to the Third Reich. Across mainland China and continental Europe a mighty train transports an elite, independent and free thinking force known to only a few as the *Kishin Corps*. Their mission: to develop a defense able to protect our world from the invaders. Their dream: to stop the advanced technologies used in the alien 'robot soldiers' from being used in wars between nations.

Fortunately this fantastic twist on the global scene has not been allowed to slow the attention to period detail. Everywhere you look there are forerunners: cars, dress, architecture and technology. There isn't a river or thermionic valve out of place. All the viewer is asked to do is believe in the presence of incomprehensible aliens and the mighty anthropomorphic machines of the *Kishin Corps*.

Eggs on Legs - The Aliens of *Kishin Heidan*

Sitely white and with the

apparent consistency of a lined



egg, the aliens are seen as an unpredictable evil force. Their actual agenda remains unknown at all times, as does their real form, since it's suggested that the alien storm-troopers seem to be more than expendable 'robot' drones.

Real consideration has gone into how these aliens operate. For instance at no time is communication between the

human forces and the aliens seen. It's alleged to happen. Either seems to have made a pact with them and provided a base of operations. But the lack of talk effectively emphasises that these are aliens not just a weird breed of men. This is further enhanced by their utter callousness. Never showing mercy they just facelessly machine gun all opposition out of the way.

Here are a few of the known facts about the aliens.

They are able to merge their bodies with people and machines. Anyone attacked in this way is turned into an 'alien'. Any machines absorbed in this way gets used as a weapon by the aliens. After receiving a heavy shock sustaining wound the alien troops self-destruct. This always happens when hit by bullets. But not after a sword slash. The only

defence against aliens when in close confinement is to use swords, not guns.

Aliens always appear from hole points, bright luminescent holes in the sky which are always hidden behind clouds. These can be detected exactly 11 minutes before the first alien troops descend from them by equipment developed by the *Kishin Corps*.

The preferred weapon of the alien troops are powerful

machine guns - looking a lot like oversized Tommy guns.

The aliens home in on lost

The world's first atomic bomb. Which the United States is threatening to use against the invaders. The Kishin Corps are desperate to stop this weapon from ever being used, feeling that further development of the atom bomb would be a crime against humanity.

The Kishins

Kishin is the generic name given to the giant piloted robots which utilise the alien control modules.

Kishin Thunder

Mighty Kishin Thunder is the most physically potent of the three original Kishins. Standing about 47 feet high and possessing enough flamethrowers, machine guns and artillery to defeat a tank battalion. It's an awesome sight. It's a squat torii and wide limbs all hark back to time when giant robots were real: barrel-chested giant robots. Kishin Dragon.

Ocean support comes from the transformable and submersible Kishin Dragon. Internally looking and feeling

very much like a World War II submarine, it's full of narrow crawlways, metal ladders and a sonar which keeps going ping. Externally it's high shoulder-squashed head design is unmistakable.

Kishin Wind

The Kishin Corps' aerial support unit. The smallest, lightest and fastest of the trio. However don't be misled by it's small size. Kishin Wind is heavily armed and certainly does not lack in the raw horsepower stakes.

Kishin Four

And finally in a supporting role we see Kishin Four. The largest of the Kishin Corps' mechanised warriors. It's 80 feet tall. Kishin Four matches a high land speed with plenty of power (supplied by six 1000-horsepower engines).

Panzer Knight

The Nazis' answer to the Kishin Corps. Panzer Knight is big, strong and very very heavily armored. Looking like a Teutonic warrior it just plain

dominates any landscape it walks across. However all this power is only achieved at a terrible cost.

There is an interesting rational as to why huge anthropomorphic battle machines have been developed. It goes a little like this: The alien modules used to control the Kishin machines and Panzer Knights require a LOT of power to run. Anything utilising them has to be big, because 1940's technology is not capable of miniaturisation. Believe me, these machines have a lot of motors in them. Which still doesn't explain why they're basically man-shaped. Well the alien troopers have two arms and two legs, and the control modules prefer to run using that form. Following a basic humanoid design also helps the pilots, because the control modules read the pilots' mind and interpret their thoughts and intentions into real actions. The Kishins have to look like big

control modules. Especially the 'Takemura' module around which much of the plot revolves.

Hey there alien wind up toys - The Mecha of Kishin Heidan

Whenever there is any action, mighty machines take centre stage. Much of the plot revolves around their use and development. After all Kishin Heidan is a mecha show, and where would a mecha show be without mecha?

Kishin Express

A huge stream train. Approximately twice the height of the average express. Used to transport Kishin Thunder around Europe and Asia, and act as a mobile base for the active defense corps.

The Fugaku

Flagship of the Kishin Airborne Division. The Fugaku is an oversized sea plane from which Kishin Wind may be launched into action. It's also used to transport VIPs like Albert Einstein... around the world.

Little White Dragon

Bareilno's beloved white sports-car. Named because it's white, and there's a dragon sculpted along the bonnet. Simple really. But oh - what a car!

Glamour Girl



people. The technology just isn't there for it. Be any other way. While the mighty mecha, icky aliens and World War 2

background provide very firm foundations: the plot and dramatic impetus is provided by the characters. However instead of just listing the dramatic personnel out, let's instead look at a few of the pivotal characters and their relationships and feelings. Because like all the classic big robot shows, it is really the people that count: they're the glue which hold everything together.

And there's certainly no better place to start than with Tetsu Takamura. Son of the scientist who first understood how to use the control modules, and orphaned in episode 1 by a Japanese Army and coincidental alien attack. Much of *Kishin Helden* is a coming of age story for Tetsu. Charting his development from a confused scared child to one of the *Kishin Corps* leading operators. Throughout this time he is watched over and adopted by the heroic pilots of the *Kishin Corps* - Rensho Dabaku Sakaki and Kinnisaku Masumi. Also essential to his development are Eva and Maria Braun. Twin sisters with very different views on life. Maria is the ever compassionate doctor who healed the injuries Tetsu sustained on his first encounter with the aliens. Eva is a scientist determined to unlock the secrets of the alien control modules. Only she doesn't care what use they eventually get put to and by whom. The relationship between the Eva, Maria and Tetsu is of key importance. They're both surrogate mothers to him. Both helping him along in their own way, as Tetsu in turn helps them by softening Eva's hard nosed attitude and by bringing the disparate sisters together. Right in the middle of Tetsu, the Braun sisters and heroes of the *Kishin Corps* is Doctor (Bill) Sugoro. One of the *Kishin* original developers and a peace fanatic. His frequent rantings and panic attacks help stir Tetsu into some of his better moments whilst reminding us what *Kishin Helden* is all about - the evils and horrors of war, and the after effects of developing new weapons of terror in many ways this is a Frankenstein story. The characters both good and bad are all being driven to



unlocking world shattering technologies by the circumstances of war. Symbolising all sides of the argument around our own development of weapons of mass destruction. But don't worry there's no preaching. The director is too skilful to allow that.

Opposing our heroes are the so called bad guys. Leading up there is Colonel Shinkai, a very clear headed and tactically thinking military man. He sees the potential of the *Kishin*'s with quite a snap. His dream is nothing less than world domination. Seeing the development work being performed by both the *Kishin Corps* and the Third Reich's industrial power-base as pawns that he can use to his own ends. Alongside him is Lieutenant Fujishima, who doesn't quite agree with Shinkai's plans. But does intend to use the technology developed by the *Kishin*'s to guarantee Japan's future prosperity. Helping along is their sergeant, Enormously strong, but not perhaps the brightest of men he fights loyally because he's a soldier not because he is evil or has pangs of his own.

Throughout the series we are reminded that the *Kishin Corps* and the members of Shinkai's team all know each other quite well. A firm reminder if ever

there was one that the *Kishin* are not mass engineered machines, but the products of a few brave dedicated men and women. Which it has to be said is a classic ingredient of this kind of boys own story. And perhaps is why *Kishin Helden* succeeds. It feels in many ways like those old cinema serials. But one that was produced with 90's attention to detail enough meaning to give older viewers something to be surprised at whilst retaining the roller-coaster ride of a viewing expected from any modern action film.

Credits - The Creation of *Kishin Helden*

Kishin Helden is based on the original best selling novel by Masaki Yamada. And was brought to life by

Taro Maki
Executive Producer
Masayuki Goto
Character Designer
Takeshi Yamazaki
Mechanical Designs and Assistant Director
Koji Wakamabe
Mechanical Designs and Assistant Director
Hiroki Miyashita

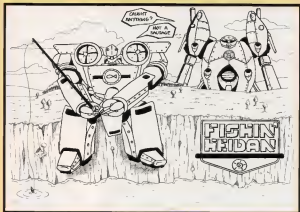
Music is by Kitaru Wada who's stirring blood pumping sound-track is perfectly performed by the Shinsei Tokyo Orchestra and the Tokyo Kosei Gashoden chorus.

WE WANT YOU!



Not literally of course, but we do want your input. If you have something to say, a moan or some praise about anything you like, just let us know. We also want to see your pictures, as we know there are plenty of budding manga artists out there. Send in whatever you like: serious, parody or even envelope art in colour or black and white. As long as it's no bigger than A4 size and you enclose an SAE if you want it returned. And as we're so unimaginative and predictable we'll let you decide what to call our letters page, so get thinking.

Send your stuff to:
LETTERS, J-FAN, TREWITHICK
HOUSE, MOORSWATER, LISKEARD,
CORNWALL, PL14 4LH



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Times, 1982: From the destruction of the Geneva limits to the introduction of a new power emerges in the form of the GENOM corporation. One of the most technologically advanced companies in the planet GENOM. It's responsible for the production of ECONOMES, an artificial workforce employed to do all the jobs too dangerous for an ordinary man. But the trouble begins when a group of Economers escape to Earth and start to cause havoc. Called to the scene are Leon McNeill and James Hatto, two members of the AD POLICE, a special force created just for this kind of job. Unfortunately what should be a routine Bomber hunt is complicated when they're faced with a robot who thinks that it's he's the next stage of human evolution and humans are not worthy to live and let him virtually to god. Things start to get a little hairy, too my the heart.

AD POLICE
By TONY THOMPSON
MANGA BOOKS
\$7.99
144 PAGES

Remember, you'd think that this cyberpunk classic would be firing on all cylinders and hurtling down the motorway at a C-Pace to make Britain wince, but it doesn't. Don't get me wrong, it is good. The main problems seem to lie in the first four chapters: the artwork is very thickly lined and too much black has been used which I found very unappealing. It isn't until chapter five, where the line work becomes fine and the beauty of the characters really get a chance to shine do you get to appreciate this graphic novel.

As for the story, the first couple of chapters were so naively influenced by *BLADE RUNNER* as to be painful and it wasn't until chapter four where the psycho-dirty robot comes into full mode that the action really heats up. The writing flows better here and also sees more of those faithful 'asides' that we've all come to know and love in manga.

All in all a good graphic novel, but don't expect to get blown out of your chair while reading it.



DUTY FIVE: SHOGA-GUN

by Yuji Igarashi

Shogakukan Books

1984

176 PAGES

When the UN forces are sent to the planet of Shogaku, they find a world of advanced technology and a race of intelligent beings.

When the UN forces are sent to the planet of Shogaku, they find a world of advanced technology and a race of intelligent beings. The story follows the adventures of the UN forces as they explore the planet and its secrets.

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For those of you unfamiliar with the anime currently out on the Manga Video label, *Crying Freeman* is the story of Yo Freeman - an assassin for the Chinese Mafia, who is instantly recruited into the FBI Dragon organization and considered to be a master of his work.

After an assignment is offered by a Japanese woman, Yoru Hirai, he agrees to deal as she does that she must be the next victim in his list. But when the time comes to kill her, he saves himself from with a difficult choice - getting the safety of his organization by letting her live, or murdering a woman that he cares for.

Those of you who have seen the anime will find most of this very familiar. It was, after all, extremely faithful to the manga in places, but while the anime version seemed more of an action story held together with blatant audacity for the hell of it, the manga does seem more acceptable. It's not that it's all that different, just that the story works better on paper than it does on the screen. That said, there is still a fair amount of unnecessary skin flying around, but it seems less gratuitous.

Despite a few winks, the story remains on realistic ground and has plenty of action with buckets of blood for split fans, and Freeman's art is always good, if a little unrefined in places.

Overall, if you thought that the anime had just to begin with was OK, then you'll be more than happy with the manga, but if you despised it accidentally, then it's unlikely to convert you.

CRYING FREEMAN

VOLUME 1 -

PORTRAIT OF A

KILLER

by Kazuo Kato and

Ryosuke Kageyama

MANGA SHOKU

£7.50

333 PAGES



ZINE Zone

We cast our beady eye over what's going on in fanzine land.

You know, there is nothing better I like than to come into work in the morning and find a big girl on my desk. Wang on, better replace that five got piece, and let's start again you should see the size of my wand this month.



IT WAS
ENOUGH,
JUST GET ON
WITH IT-ED

Oh, first up this month are the offerings from **GALILEE PRESS** courtesy of **JOHN 'ONI' CLARK**, **LAURA WATTON'S BIG MECAM**.

34 pages £5p

Set in Tokyo 2025 BJD MISHA tells the story of 17

year-old Toshio Takaya who after a freak accident involving a motorist and a cop of 'HIROMI TAKAYA' is left with a pair of rather powerful mechanical arms. The story follows Toshio as he tries to come to terms with the frustration caused by his new arms. The artwork is up to Laura's usual high standard with some very professional looking by Clark. One question though, how do they stand up with all that hair???

ARIEL - HIGH SCHOOL DEVIL GIRL
26 pages £5p

Josh Clark's second instalment of the adventures of the devil's very own daughter! In this issue we find Ariel excited to school on Earth with only her father's second 'ORDEPHROFUTURER' for company and having to face the super powered MAGNUS in a rather brutal game of baseball. The great cover PAGE D THE DEVIL DUDE! and Josh's throwaway page will have you eager for more.

WAYNE CRATTON'S HIROMI TAKAYA
20 pages £1.10

INTERVIEW WITH AN ASSASSIN In a

very consistent introduction to Wayne's main character HIROMI TAKAYA, a hired assassin who actually manages to look out of place on a catwalk. While giving the impression of a good natured and intelligent woman, I'm sure there's a mean streak a mile wide and plenty of secrets inside her just waiting to pounce in future issues. With only 4 pages to introduce us to the character the story is well written with some great panels and nice colour (back of the bike sticker). Given a couple of years to fine tune the drawing and faces can tend to go PICASSO at times! Wayne, along with Laura Watton will be a force to be reckoned with in the field of British manga.

AMERICA

80 pages £1.35

The flagship of GALILEE PRESS and quite rightly so. Issue 3 comes packed with 80 pages of class material ranging from articles on OH MY GODDESS and 'TUTU HUNTER' to debates on pulp anime and the portrayal of war in manga. Short stories in this issue are





RECIPE FOR LOVE by Liane 'LAT-CLARK' Lection based on OH MY GOSHOUSH and part 2 of 'RECLAMATIONS'. A megasection 25 story by Josh 'OHMY-Clark'. Also on show is an article on 'DOLLHOUSE' or fan manga so if you're a budding artist you're wary about starting this should give you all the encouragement that you need.

I must say that from all the fanzines that we have received (and that's not many, Come on folks, send 'em in) this has to be the most professional of them all.

RED LEOPARD 48 pages £1.20

Probably one of the most vibrant and definitely the funniest of the fanzines I've read. Issue one gave us treasures on fan manga, Jackie Chan and CHIBIBITTY? (are if you think that's strange, wait til you see issue 2). ISSUE 2. This time we have reviews of seven of the major fanzines in the UK, more Jackie plus SAUSAGES! Included in both issues are short stories by Paul Lambshire plus items on the history of porn and all A to Z of cult movies. The unavoidable high points of these fanzines are the bits which consist of things like 10 STUPID THINGS YOU SEE ON THE MIDDLEWAY, 11 THINGS NOT ADVISABLE TO DO WITH YOUR CAR and 10 THINGS THAT THINGS AREN'T QUITE POSS.

MANGAFFECT/ANIMURA 48 pages £1.00

Issue 3 is the last ever MANGAFFECT to be produced by SAMURAI PRESS. But don't despair, there're just changing the name. This title has seen rather a few changes over the better I might add in its lifetime and it keeps improving. Starting out as a black and white A5 production, issue 3 is a real colour cover but the contents was lacking, being mainly review based (get that behind me Satani). This new issue is now in a very acceptable A6



B5 format. Let's have a look inside: Leading the page we have a short 5 page manga called HIMITO KIRAKI followed regularly by a feature on Benoit Sponcar's tales. GALLIE PEGGS are treated to a full product review (this guy gets everywhere-DO! with Josh 'OHMY-Clark's SPINNI QUASQUAN things bringing us the rear A to Z.

pages MANGAFFECT has something for everyone and it's a very competent publication. Don't wait to see the new one.

OSKAN SHONEN ASHURA CAIDEN 42 pages

As this fanzine is from Belgium and it's written in French I have to be honest with you, I am crap at French! My linguistic knowledge is not so much schoolboy French, more primary

schoolboy French. But hey who cares this is a good fanzine. Produced by Charles Focant for the Ashura Caiden. One this fanzine is presented on good quality paper with a nice card cover and the printing is excellent.

Inside we have an introduction to Japanese words in French-as my acting head! a feature on top in Japan and Japanese RPG's, ending this issue nicely is an article on RPS and a nice little cultural lesson on D&D. I am really impressed with this fanzine and it has really made me want to brush up on my French, just so I can understand it.

The fanzines reviewed here are available from the following:-

BIO MECHA, ARIERI, HITOMI TAKAY and ANIMEA
CAIJIN PRESS, 2 BIRKDALE DRIVE, WIMBORNE, GRIMSBY, SOUTH HUMBERSIDE, DN40 2LE.
TEL: (0460) 574025

RED LEOPARD
329 PINCHAMPTSEAD ROAD, WOKINGHAM, BERKSHIRE, RG4 3UT.

MANGAFFECT/ANIMURA
SAMURAI PRESS, BRYDENT LODGE, COLLEGE ROAD, EAST WALTON, GRIMSBY, DN40 3PJ

OSKAN SHONEN ASHURA CAIDEN
CLUB ASHURA CAIDEN, c/o CHARLES FOCANT, 132 AVE LEBURTON, 4300 WAREMME, BELGIUM.

We will gladly review any fanzine sent to us, so what are you waiting for?



MIURA A NATSU M

A brief overview of this years summer

Arranged by Miura Ajin Kai (an Anglo-Japanese club), sponsored by literally dozens of Japanese companies in Battersea

Starting at 2.15 pm, the festival was opened with the cracking open of a sake barrel, entertainments on stage including some work by members of the Gyosei college from Reading, costume dance, classic koto and of course, enthusiasts

Food stalls were in abundance, selling everything from noodles to traditional Bento (Japanese lunch) and Ikebana (flower arranging)

For those with a bit of spare cash (and believe it or not, stalls selling manga, kimonos, cd's of ultra-ornaments are

Overall this was a great day and I would thoroughly recommend this festival. See you



JIN KAI'S MATSURI

... festival in London's Battersea Park...

Japanese culture group based in London and Japan, the 11th Matsuri was held on July 29th in Battersea Park, London.

Organised by H.E. Japanese Ambassador Mr Hiroaki Fujii, the festival itself presented a variety of wonderful examples of traditional Taiko drumming, martial arts, and other performances. Other performances included a traditional Japanese karaoke competition, with some very talented entrants.

Everything from noodles to noodles and more, and a variety of stalls. A martial arts display, calligraphy, Go were amongst the other stalls.

By the time I came away with no money! there were a lot of stalls, a kawaii J-POP idol singers and masses of stalls selling lacquerware. I can thoroughly recommend attending next year's Matsuri. You won't regret it.



All photographs © Mark West.

MACROSS PLUS

DEMON RECORDS

CAT: DSCD 12

£12.99

11 TRACKS

52:25 mins

This is an impressive CD and I extend my thanks to DEMON RECORDS for releasing it in the UK. Having been bowled over by the amazing MACROSS PLUS series (RELEASED BY MANGA VIDEO) I decided to splash out on the soundtrack and I am glad I did.

Written and arranged by YOKO KAWANO and performed by members of the Israeli Philharmonic Orchestra, the CD has a very rich and grand feeling from the opening NATIONAL ANTHEM OF MACROSS filled with brass and strings to the soft waltz of 'VERY LITTLE WISHES'. The track 'FLY UP IN THE AIR' gives the listener a very real feeling of flight, very much in the vein of HOLST'S 'PLANET SUITE'. In fact this whole CD does have some of the feel of that great work with it's dark, moody tracks such as: MORE THAN 30cm, the delicate piano of the 'MYUNG THEME' and the bold brassiness of 'BREAK OUT'.

There are only three songs on this album and what songs they are. The first is an electrically charged concert track with a distinctly Asian feel to it. The second is my personal favourite called 'VOICES'. This is such a simple song, sung beautifully by AKINO ARAI and back with the simplest percussion IT'S WELL 'WORTH BUYING THE CD JUST FOR THIS TRACK'. The final vocal track would not look out of place next to the BEATLES 'NUMBER 9' from the WHITE ALBUM. Very strange and haunting vocals.

Well to sum up, this CD is essential listening: the music and songs are incredible and the booklet is jam-packed with stills from the series and the lyrics for the three vocals. A worthy addition to any collection. Keep up the good work, DEMON.



ANIMAGE COMPLETE COLLECTION

ANIMAGE

RECORDS/TOKUMA JAPAN

COMMUNICATIONS

CAT: TKCA 30706

20 TRACKS 61:30 mins

If there is one composer on this planet who deserves not only international recognition but also every award the music industry has to offer it is JOE HISASHI. The man is a God and deserves to be worshipped. The ANIMAGE PERFECT COLLECTION bring together a selection of his greatest pieces of composition & choral works from the films by KAZUO MIURA, another man who deserves immortality. The pieces on this CD are taken from the following films: LAPUTA, MY NEIGHBOUR TOTORO (TOKIWA NO TORO), NAUSICAÄ, KIKI'S DELIVERY SERVICE & PORCO ROSSO. Each of the films has a uniquely different feel in terms of the music but all retain the distinct HISASHI character. Starting with PORCO ROSSO, we are

taken on a rollercoaster ride through the clouds with the aid of a marvellous cooperation of brass, strings and percussion. Following the very French sound of KIKI we are treated to some of my favourite music in any anime, the completely infectious SANPO. From the opening credits of TOTORO, I DEIFY ANYONE NOT TO END UP TAPPING THEIR FOOT TO THIS OR EVEN SINGING ALONG BY THE END OF THE TRACK.

Instantly recognisable, we are bathed in the glorious, rolling strings of LAPUTA (WHICH I FALL ASLEEP TO ALMOST EVERY NIGHT). Changing styles quite dramatically now we are offered the powerful brass tones of NAUSICAÄ, with their obvious Indian influence adding a very exotic feel to the piece. It's no good, I can't help myself, yes, it's another TOTORO track... this time from the end of the film we have another even more singable chorus with a beat that could even put a smile on JOHN MAJOR. 14 MINUTE PAUSE WHILE I LISTEN TO THE TRACK WHILE PLAYING WITH MY CUDDY TOTORO (CD BR).

AAARRGH... It's the 'OSTRUMMIES' song (HISASHI), I'll just have to sing along again... I CAN'T HELP



IT... OH NO... IT'S THE CATBUS SONG... I DON'T CARE IF I HAVE TO WRITE THE REVIEW ITS ONLY THREE MINUTES LONG AND I'M THE EDITOR ANYWAY, SO THERE! One of the most stirring pieces I feel on this CD is the final track, a beautiful piano rendition of the

NAUSICAÄ theme
Well what can I say. Buy this CD now sort of tame it up. If you've never seen or heard a MINAMOTO/HSIANGH work (SHAME ON YOU) then this is a perfect introduction and should easily help you to relieve the money from your bank as you order the other 2D or 3D CD's available.

YS IV - THE DAWN OF YS
PERFECT COLLECTION VOL 2
KING RECORD Co
CAT:KICA 1140
22 TRACKS 60:34 mins

I have to say that I've long regarded the first two YS games as some of the best RPG's every produced and the music has always been some of the best and most enduring of any game soundtrack. So it was with great excitement, having never yet played YS IV (anyone out there got it on the PC ENGINE?) to be able to discover what the latest volume had in store. I wasn't disappointed. For those of you who have never come across or avoided arranged versions of game music, it really comes down to whether you like synth sound or not. And I'm not talking about some cheesy elevator music, this stuff is the equivalent of Jean Michelle Jarré though more punchy and to the point.

On to the CD itself, the first impressions are high, with a smart racy opening track. Followed by a slower track, the CD follows the general pattern of mixing fast and slow, keeping you from getting bored. Being game based, none of the tracks are very long, but this is really a bonus as you get more tunes for your money. A special mention should go to track 11 which is utterly superb. So there. For those of you who have heard any of the previous YS music, this does have a different feel to it. The tunes are not as destined to become classics as the others were, even though they are very well composed. But there is a real treat for any old hands. On the end of the CD are a selection of new arrange versions of music from YS I. Nice versions of **REST IN PEACE** and **FEENA** (the title track) are followed by one of my favourites, **THE SHADOW OF DEATH**, which is great but just too short. The sound crew have gone all-out on a wild version of **THE LAST MOMENT OF THE DARK** (Dawn tower) and an excellent YS IV **SUPER MEGA MIX** closes the CD with a satisfying finale. If you like YS synth or game music, then this is a worthy addition to your collection. As a footnote, other FALCOM CDs available include YS IV J D K SPECIAL, YS PRIMO COLLECTION and THE LEGEND OF KANADU J D K SPECIAL.

way for the more recent title track, **WE GOTTA POWER**. At first I didn't like this as much as the excellent **CHA-IA**, but after I listened to it a few times, it really began to grow on me, much in the same way that **CHA-IA** did. Thumbs up. Track 2 is a strange one, sung by someone putting on a silly voice. It's really too weird to comment on in a sensible publication like this mean, right? Ed. Bouncy track 3 is fun to listen to, and the slow track 4 is alright. Track 5, however, is a real gem. It's a slow-ish song that has that perfect rhythm to it that makes it foot-tappingly good, and with adorable lyrics like **SABIN, SABIN, SABON!** It's utterly singable. Track 6, sung by the guy who did **CHA-IA** is pretty good, but the real star of this CD is track 7. All together **GO GO LET'S GO TO RAIN-BOU SU!** This song is totally brilliant and I can't stop it (**SHU-SHU-RA!**) going around in my head. Be warned though, squeaky voices are in abundance. Track 8 is quite 'mellow' (homie word!) but very listenable and wouldn't sound out of place on a **CITY HUNTER CD** (**SHU-SHU-RA!**). Generally, if you've got any other **DRAGON BALL 2** CDs, you won't be disappointed, and if you haven't then you could do worse than give this a try (**SHU-SHU-RA!**) (That's enough Ed.)

DRAGON BALL 2 -
HIT COLLECTION 16
SM RECORDS
CAT: SM 257
10 TRACKS
41:19 mins

Firstly I must admit to being a huge **DRAGON BALL** fan, so take into account that my natural bias will creep into this review. All the tracks of this are songs, so to begin at the beginning, we find that the omnipresent **CHA-IA HEAD-CHA-IA** has taken a vacation to make



HAVE WE NOT MET BEFORE? OR IT'S DEJA VU

PETER CULLEN takes a look at recurring themes in anime

During the meteoric rise in popularity recently enjoyed by anime (and to a lesser extent eastern live action) in this country, much has been made of obvious recurring themes, and there are a few questions that every long-time anime fan has become quite fed-up of answering in the last four years or so: 'What dedicated J-head hasn't heard, at one time or another, 'Why are their eyes so big?', 'Why are there so many robots?', 'Why all the tentacles?' or the slightly more uncomfortable 'Why do the girls look so young?' The beginner's thirst for knowledge can be quenched by a reading of Helen McCarthy's excellent book *Anime! A Beginner's Guide to Japanese Animation*, available from good bookshops, which is far and away the best introduction to the medium for the newcomer available in English. If you haven't already, read it before proceeding.

In this article, I'll be considering a few conventions - features that just seem to keep appearing, over and over again. Some may not be obvious to the neophyte, but as you watch more anime I can promise you'll start to get a feeling of *deja vu*, so watch out for a few of these. For reference, I've included some examples of where you might see them.

1. Deus Ex Machina *o/p*: Here comes the cavalry!

From the Greek *dei* 'God' from the machine: this phrase is used to describe a mighty deity-like power gained from technology. The interpretation I am concentrating on, and the one most annoying both in anime and live action, is the sudden resolution of a dangerous situation by what can only be described as divine intervention.

In ancient Greek plays, the hero would sometimes be saved at the last possible moment by a chair representing the hand of the Gods: that would be lowered onto the stage, would carry him away from the jaws of danger. In modern times (meaning contemporary storytelling as, of course, the most popular place for supertechnology is in future times/science fiction), the God of technology is too often used to wrap up plots as a substitute for character development. Sometimes it can be pretty funny, if done with a little tongue-in-cheek irony, but usually it's a slightly irritating technique used by lazy

sensationalist

filmmakers.

Some particularly extreme examples from recent UK releases have been *Plastic Little* - a shallow but well designed adventure which ends and I told you not, with the heroine spilling out tread vapourfart! the entire planetary

navy with one shot from a later canon the sub of Shippodine the timely appearance of Megadoping Gildora at the end of the recent remake of *Goddess vs King Gildora*, and the planet sized black hole bomb from



Gumbuster

The best place to spot the Deus Ex Machina however is Saturday morning kids TV. That's right kids: *Power Rangers*. In every single episode without fail, they fight a monster for a while, get trounced, summoned up the big robot and save the day. In the very rare event that this doesn't work they just summon a bigger one, and then a bigger one. Check out the section below on *Sentai* for some explanation of why this formula is adhered to with such enthusiasm, and in case you were wondering, we'll be

meeting those *Power Rangers* again.

See: The original *Goddess* (1984) in which someone in its divine wisdom, defeats a big bad by using a machine to take all the bays out of the cobbins. Take a moment to think about that.

3. Bunny Ears *o/p*: See, what's up Deet?

Cheer with bunny ears, why are they so cute? There is an obvious reference here to Hugh Hefner's *Playboy* bunny girls, who've been icons of the eye-bandy market for decades now, and whose success at marketing images is legendary. The American cultural mission of Japan after the Second World War brought with it much in the way of popular media imagery, notably Disney's cute, large-eyed cartoon characters (who arguably set something of a standard for all mainstream animation from 1957



BEFORE MONSIEUR?★

ALL OVER AGAIN

Themes in Anime (and Japanese live action)



onwards! Baseball (the iconography rather than simply the sport) and western style soft porn (which let's not beat about the bush here, is what Playboy is).

It wouldn't be at all fair to say that bunny ears appear only in a pornographic context, however, as it's really just another way to introduce elements of cuteness into anime in live action or for that matter real (ir)realistic Concept though it is life they seem, and frankly are, incredibly cappy but in anime where the surreal is more readily accepted they seem somehow acceptable.

Bunny ears can be seen, of course, as a subconcept of anthropomorphism, which we'll talk about in a moment.

See Ursel Yatsu GAW into the Dream Master (the world of dreams is apparently run by giant rabbits necessitating the donning of magic bunny costumes by our heroes) Silbuster (powerful with bunny ears!) and for an example of implicit rather than explicit bunny ness, episode two onwards of Devil Hunter Yoko (Yoko's supernatural machide stick has a hair bow that is linguistically bunny ear-shaped).

3. Sound Effects (or Misheard?)

Written Japanese has very different origins to our European Latin based languages. In English, letters are essentially a code to represent spoken sounds (meaning given by pronunciation). In Japanese, on the other hand, a set of symbols (a very large set with five thousand characters in everyday use, derived from the Chinese known as Kanji) represent meaning, each pictograph a word in itself. Before you go thinking you've been suddenly and inexplicably transported to a different publication, the reason for this little language lesson is just to introduce the fact that Japanese people have a different view of the connection between sound and images to we Brits.

This leads to the appearance of seemingly superfluous sound effects (or in manga, floating words) in all sorts of situations. Most commonly, blinking eyes go 'blink' smiles go 'doo' fondling fingers go 'quish-quish' and most bizarrely of all, absolute silence is represented by shin. In the hilarious 'super-deformed' comedy GAW Scramble Wars, moments of silence is demonstrated by the entire



cast yelling 'Shin!' at the top of their tiny lungs. Sometimes animators even go so far as to put floating writing into anime, instead of sound effects, often semi-subliminally, the images only lasting a frame or two.

See: Any manga, or just about any comedy anime.

4. Sentai (or Go go away Power)

Rangerella

Twenty years ago, The Toei production company hit upon a winning formula: the Reddy Marland. Joe Davis, Wayne Gretzky of formula, in fact. The basic idea was simple: take a group of superheroes, colour code them, and have them fight a never ending stream of strange monsters. Repeat until the end of time.

Incredible as it may seem, this concept has spanned eighteen almost identical but unrelated prototype series, and more than eight hundred episodes in total.

The teams (or sentai, as a rule, consist of between five and seven members: mainly male, but always with one or two women), each distinguished by a costume of bright, primary colour (usually selected from Red, Blue, Black, White, Yellow, Green and Pink, yes, pink) and a personal weapon. Each hero also has their own mecha, which they can summon, control/pilot, and if necessary (and somehow it always is) join with all the other mechs to form one giant robot, which kicks, to coin a phrase, butt.



PROJECT A-KO

THE POCKET GUIDE

by Robert Lyn Davies

It's mayhem time again. Project A-Ko is once again on the prowl, looking for poor unsuspecting fans to hook on to its ever popular brand of anime parody, mecha action, school girl rivalry and the massive destruction of populated urban areas. Let's for the moment leave behind us the statistics of when A-Ko was produced and by whom. Instead let's get into the spirit of the thing. All together now - 'Akagiyama Missiles I' C'mon; yell it out.

Why shout 'Akagiyama Missiles'? Because at the core of the A-Ko series is youthful enthusiasm. It's a high school story where the characters sole motivators are being friends, getting to class on time, tracking down suitable boy friends and throwing the latest army tanks over tall buildings. This is not sensible anime. It's wacky and inspired. Choosing not to ignore conventions, but to celebrate in them whilst wickedly make fun of the sacred cows of so much anime. Something which makes sense considering that the first Project A-Ko movie was made in 1986 - slap bang in the middle of the anime explosion which would eventually escape from Japan to conquer the Western world. But that's another story. Let's grab some background info.

Starting with where all the action takes place

Gravitas City

Levelled 18 years before the story starts by an impacting alien. (Birth of unknown origin. Gravitas has risen from its ruins to become a beautiful high tech metropolis. Most of the city still resides in the impact crater left by the starship. The bridge of which dominated downtown Gravitas City.

And introducing -

Project A-Ko would be absolutely nipping without it's characters, so let's go and meet them

The Main Players

A-Ko - The worlds most powerful schoolgirl. Look anyone who can catch a falling steel girder, casually chuck 50 foot tall mechs over his shoulder or accidentally destroy large chunks of alien technology is powerful. **A-Ko** - Cool calm serene

manipulative. The bad little rich girl with an army of spies and an unparalleled ability to design huge robots overnight. **A-Ko** only wants C-Ko, and what A-Ko wants she gets - whatever the cost.

C-Ko - Pure and blissfully unaware of anything around her. A-Ko's best friend, the worlds most dangerous co-conspirator. **Seagun** - A long haired pink haired princess alien selected to assist A-Ko in her endeavours.





characters in anime - even if they on earth are they called A-Ko, B-Ko and C-Ko? Because Ko is Japanese for child and the writers couldn't decide what to name them so they left their original temporary name tags in place (which incidentally allegedly stand for Athletic, Brainsy and Cute). Through the Project A-Ko name was there from the start since it is allegedly in homage to the Jackie Chan classic Project A. Which features Jackie at the centre of much mayhem whilst wearing a sailor suit.

The Supporting Cast

The Gross Dressing Aliens

Say B: Hugely muscled and simple of mind (probably caused by being run over by A-Ko so many times) B only wants to get her Princess back to her homeland.

Captain Mopolopolis: The drunken captain of the space cruiser which has spent the past 10 years looking for C-Ko. In later episodes she converts the ship into a leisure complex with the delicious intent of stripping the people of Graviton City of enough money to pay for its repairs.

The Long suffering School Teacher Miss Ayumi: The girls' English tutor, with a penchant for strange poetry she never seems to ever complete a lesson without either her pupils being late or running out on her.

The Industrial Magnate

B-Ko's Father

Like his daughter he's permanently over dressed. He seems to have a affinity for this Presley impersonations and would have made a great lounge singer in another life. In this life he only wants to stay rich, make the military buy his wares and grab lots of Alien Super-technology.

Not content with one hugely successful theatre release, there followed three made-for-video direct sequels which chart the unchanging relationship between one trio whilst adding in new elements. (Such as B-Ko's fathers attempt to seize the alien space cruiser which A-Ko and B-Ko

'crashed' into Graviton City and the end of the first film, a lead interest and another source of rivalry between the trio. And in Part 3 & 4, of course each episode also contains plenty of giant robots and guest appearance by other anime characters for the sharp eyed fan. The completion of the first three sequels really took the Graviton City setting about as far as it could go. So for the next two videos new life was injected into the series by transplanting it to an alien desert world. Here B-Ko and A-Ko are friends - until C-Ko falls from the sky and into their camp. Once again madness and mayhem start up in what are the definite highlights of the video series. Returning once again to the non stop comic action which so beautifully dominated the first film.

Project A-Ko: the mini reviews

Original year of release - in Japan

Project A-Ko (1988)

One of Manga Entertainment's first UK dubs and still one of its best. The UK voice track matches pretty much perfectly the flow of action which never falters and is always fun. This is still one of the most recommendable releases in the UK and a near perfect example of it's genre. **Highly Recommended**

Project A-Ko 2

Plot of the Galsinski Financial Group (1989)

Set three weeks after events in the first movie, this hilarious OVA follow up is a worthy sequel, managing the difficult

balancing act of progressing the characters from the original story whilst maintaining all the components expected of an A-Ko story. **Recommended**

Note the UK release used the US Manga Corps dub - so it's all change in the voice department but fear not.

the American cast do a fine job. **Project A-Ko 3 - Cinderella Rapidity (1989)**

This attempts to show our three heroines growing up. A-Ko is looking for a cute boyfriend, C-Ko is getting jealous, B-Ko suspects something more sinister is going on and a charming chap called Kat gets caught in between the three of them. **Recommendable!** Well err... it's okay. It's a brave attempt to mature the format, but then again I personally don't want to see these girls growing up. Technically it's fine, good animation, good dubbing, some neat effects and a host of hilarious macho and flamboyant anime character rip offs. Expect a slowing down of pace and you should be too disappointed. **Project A-Ko & Final (1989)**

This closing episode to the three Graviton City City OVA tied up the plot lines running through the movie and A-Ko's 1 & 2, while giving us a nice happy ending. At the same time it never boringly repeats itself, adding a few new twists to the in-jokes and 'guest appearances' that are a vital part of Project A-Ko. A good OVA, I expect the UK release to be well worth the watch.

Project A-Ko the Vs. Battle 1st Grey





Side
Project A-Ko: the Vs - Battle 2: Blue
Side (both 1990)

It's goodfrie Graviton city and hello to a strange new universe. But even in this new alternative dimension some things remain constant. C-Ko is overly cute. B-Ko still loves her gadgets and A-Ko is

destruction: what then? How can you further partake in this wonderful world of schoolgirl hùlles? Well the answer could well be Project A-Ko the Role Playing Game.

Published by Janus Publications in the US and available in this country from specialist comic and role-playing stores the game consists of a simple easy to run rules system and a mass of Project A-Ko background information.

And finally - let the credits roll (for the original movie at least)

Story: Katsuhiko Nishijima
Screenplay: Yuji

SOME OTHER FAMOUS PROJECTS

- PROJECT X - A film about monkeys and Matthew Broderick, but not necessarily in that order
- PROJECT Z - A mechanical bed that cares for old people, then goes wild, destroying everything in sight
- PROJECT BLUE BOOK - US Government investigation into UFO's whose conclusions were naturally ignored
- PROJECT K - A mail-order anime stockist that's getting a free ad by appearing in this article
- PROJECT FEROCIOUS - Genetic experiments involving the cross-breeding of alligators and wood pigeons (err, we made that one up actually)

Moriyama, Katsuhiko Nishijima
(Tomoko Kawasaki)
Art Director: Shinji Kimura
Character Designer: Yuji Moriyama
Animation Director: Yuji Moriyama
About Yuji Moriyama

He is an incredibly talented man working not only on Project A-Ko and the first 3 sequels but also on a wealth of other classic anime such as Urusei Yatsura - TV Series, Wings of Honneamise, Robot Carnival, Urusei Yatsura movies (Only You and Beautiful Dreamer), Tenchi-muyo (parts 1&2), Cat Girl Nuku Nuku (and quite a few others). Is it any wonder that Project A-Ko turned out so good?



amazingly strong. The plot path there's one but what matters is the non stop slapstick action. Occasionally slightly ouch! but always painfully funny and tongue in cheek. I would suspect that if the voice acting lived up to the quality of prints 2 & 3 then these releases will be very very easy to highly recommend.

UK Release Schedule

- Project A-Ko out since August '92
- Project A-Ko 2 available since July '93 - what a long wait!
- Project A-Ko 3 September '93
- Project A-Ko 4 November '93
- Project A-Ko Vs The Grey Side January '94
- Project A-Ko Vs The Blue Side March '94

But once you've watched your Project A-Ko videos to



THE ANIME SOLA

THE SUN

by Kenji Kamiyama

With all of its warmth and beauty, this is truly the Sun of the Anime Solar System. Sharing a common theme in anime is a boy meets girl princess/princess/beautiful princess etc. This is a romantic comedy that really makes you feeling warm inside. The plot is simple as Goddess Gullia doesn't reach's wish to have a girlfriend for life, and the animation, in particular the character design, is a delight to watch. Don't let the U certificate for the price put you off, it is really worthwhile.

AVAILABLE FROM
ANIME PROJECTS (USD)

VENUS

by Kenji Kamiyama

Set (initially) on Venus, this is the big screen version of Yoshioka Yoshioka's epic manga story. Assuming the expectation to be typical, ANIMEUS takes more of a political bent with the lead character, who is being bought up with and forced into the military during a civil war between two opposing factions. The atmosphere of the movie is excellent, with lots of orange used in abundance, and the soundtrack by Aki Mizuki (Lupin Takers etc.) has some fantastic moments. The only gripe is poor voice acting, but this aside, it's a superb action movie.

AVAILABLE FROM
MANGA VIDEO (DUB)

ALTERNATIVE EARTH

by Kenji Kamiyama

Another GAINAX movie, this is set on an alternative world that is on the verge of space flight. It is definitely NOT an action movie, but a well crafted and thought provoking tale of the struggle to get a man into space against all the odds. Since Unai, the man in question starts off as a boy, no hope, but his chance meeting with an overly religious young woman (and her on to his true identity) the story design is appealing, and the animation itself is very good with an amazing attention to detail that helps to create a complete, but different, universe.

AVAILABLE FROM
MANGA VIDEO (USD/DUB)



MARS

by Kenji Kamiyama

Sharing the same properties as its host planet (i.e. small but hot), this is an ideal introduction to the way of life of an anime fanatic, crammed full of so many in-jokes that even the most hardened fan may have trouble spotting them. The story shows the rise and fall (and the sequel) of a company started by a group of technically illiterate and is broken up by some live action documentary-style interludes that are aimed to be believe it's crazy. Chien's designs by Kenji Kamiyama are just the tip of the iceberg in this glossy GAINAX production.

AVAILABLE FROM
ANIME PROJECTS (USD)



EARTH

by Kenji Kamiyama

This is a true bath of fresh air for the UK anime scene. A down to earth, soap opera style story with a claim to it that will keep you glued. It follows the life of a teenage girl, Minako, who by the use of a wig and a pair of glasses dyes two boys at school, with neither realising her alternate identity. The story doesn't linger on this, though, and develops into a fight between the boys for Minako and the lecherous sports coach's apparent affection for her. There are no unrealistic moments in this anime and this makes it believable and compelling to watch.

AVAILABLE FROM
WESTERN CONNECTION (USD)



THE ASTEROID BELT

AVAILABLE FROM
MAY 15, 1997 \$9.95



1000

AVAILABLE FROM
EISENBERG BOOKS



100

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO



Wentworth

AVAILABLE FROM
STERN CONSTRUCTION SUPPLY



(If you've been to band, so what about the world? We'd like money for me in a world. The current scene out here, or hell, even if you want to be good. The original idea is sound and has a lot of potential, but average audience, a few mythical and classical acting out the show. What's worse is that it's so popular. Another contender would be DDM which is so boring that it's not even worthy of more than a sentence. But what do you think?)

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Shining Paco's quality first. However, for any life's journey in front of your face, you're not a failure. It's a welcome side-effect in the film for Margot Vidor. The movie is based on one of the most popular anime series in Japan and revolves around a group of characters in Tokyo's Mobile Police Department who utilize huge robots called "Robots" as a means of fighting crime. Although a robot anime at heart, the story has little action and relies more on suspense, a good solid plot and the remarkable direction of Mamoru Hosoda.

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Not an all-around with the classic panel. Handled this is one of the most famous cyberpunk films around. Although playing heavily on influences from *BLADE RUNNER*, it is an original story in its own right and has a huge fan following. Considerable such star elements as GUN in powerful, rugged cyborg, tons of bleeding action and an impressive rock soundtrack.

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